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THE

MINUTES

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

PITTSBURGH CONVENTION,

CALLED BY

THE SIGNERS OF THE

"ACT AND TESTIMONY."

MAY 14, 1835.

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1835.

MINUTES.

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 1835.

The CONVENTION recommended by the signers of the "ACT AND TESTIMONY," issued by the minority of the last General Assembly, in concert with others, met, in the Second Presbyterian Church in the city of Pittsburgh, at 12 o'clock, M.

The Rev. JOHN WITHERSPOON was called to the Chair, and the Rev. ISAAC V. BROWN and the Rev. THOMAS ALEXANDER were appointed Secretaries, pro tem.

The following named persons presented certificates, or other satisfactory evidence of appointment by their Presbyteries, and took their seats as members of the Convention, viz:

PRESBYTERIES.	
New York,	Rev. W. W. Philips, D. D.
"	Elder James Lenox, Jr.
Newton,	Rev. George Junkin, D. D.
Susquehanna,	Rev. Jas. C. Sharon.
New Castle,	Rev. Jas. Magraw.
"	Elder Jas. Wilson.
Northumberland,	Rev. John H. Grier.
"	Elder Andrew Ferguson.
Huntingdon,	Rev. John Hutcheson.
Beaver,	Rev. Thos. E. Hughes, Sr.
"	Elder John Clark.
Redstone,	Rev. Ashbel G. Fairchild.
Steubenville,	Rev. John Rea.
"	Elder Matthew M'Coy.
Washington,	Rev. Jas. Hervey.
Ohio,	Rev. Thos. D. Baird.
"	Elder Dr. Robert Wray.
Richland,	Rev. Wm. Hughes.
"	Elder John Ewalt.
Miami,	Rev. Jas. Coe.
"	Elder E. Burrows.
Oxford,	Rev. Thos. E. Hughes, Jr.
Lancaster,	Rev. Jas. Culbertson.
"	Elder John Thompson.
Madison,	Rev. James Blythe, D. D.
Kaskaskia,	Rev. John Matthews.
Louisville,	Rev. N. L. Rice.
"	Elder John Carr.
South Carolina,	Rev. Hugh Dixon.

Harmony,	Rev. John Witherspoon.
Tuscaloosa,	Rev. Joseph B. Adams.
Amite,	Rev. John L. Montgomery.

The following persons also appeared, and presented certificates, or other satisfactory evidence of their appointment as delegates by the minorities of the several Presbyteries to which they belong, and took their seats as members of the Convention.

PRESBYERTIES.	
New Brunswick,	Rev. Isaac V. Brown.
Genesee,	Rev. Alex. Denoon.
"	Elder John M'Pherson.
Erie,	Rev. Johnston Eaton.
Portage,	Rev. John D. Hughes.
Cincinnati,	Rev. Joshua L. Wilson.
"	Elder Wm. Schillenger.
South Alabama,	Rev. Thos. Alexander.
Salem,	Rev. Alex. Williamson.

The Rev. James Blythe, D. D., was requested to preach at 3 o'clock, P. M.; and the Convention resolved on a recess until after the close of divine service.

At half after 4 the Convention resumed business.

In addition to those whose names have already been recorded, the following persons appeared, and, having presented certificates of their appointment by the Presbyteries to which they belong, took their seats in the Convention.

PRESBYTERIES.	
Carlisle,	Rev. John Moody.
"	Elder Robert Elliott.
Blairsville,	Rev. Francis Laird.
"	Elder Jas. Carothers.
Wooster,	Rev. James Snodgrass.

The Rev. Alex. D. Campbell, also, having produced satisfactory evidence of his appointment by the minority of the Presbytery of the Western District, took his seat in the Convention.

On motion, *Resolved*, That this Convention adopt the "General Rules" usually observed by our church judicatories, and printed in the Book of Discipline, as the rules by which the proceedings of this Convention shall be regulated, so far as those rules may be applicable to this house.

The Convention proceeded to the appointment of its permanent officers; and ASHBEL GREEN, D. D., was appointed President, the Rev. JOHN WITHERSPOON, Vice-President, and the Rev. Messrs. *James Culbertson* and *Ashbel G. Fairchild*, Secretaries.

On motion, *Resolved*, That the members of this Convention will spend to-morrow as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, with especial reference to the objects for which they are assembled; and that the Rev. Messrs. Brown and Baird, and Mr. William Schillenger, Elder, be a committee, in conjunction with the pastor of this church, to make arrangements for conducting the religious exercises of the day.

The Rev. Drs. Blythe, Magraw, Montgomery, and Phillips, with the Elders, Robert Wray, Jas. Lenox, Jr., and Arch'd George, were appointed a standing committee, to whom all papers relating to the business of the Convention shall be referred, and through whom they shall be introduced to the Convention.

Adjourned, to meet on Saturday morning at 9 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.

SATURDAY MORNING, May 16.

The Convention met, and was opened with prayer. Members present as before. The minutes of the last session were read.

Yesterday was observed as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, in connexion with the people of the congregation in whose place of worship its sessions are held, and others also. The religious exercises were well attended, exceedingly solemn and interesting.

The following persons presented certificates of their appointment by the Presbyteries to which they belong, and took their seats in Convention, viz:

PRESBYTERIES.	
Philadelphia,	Rev. Ashbel Green, D. D.
"	Elder Alexander Symington.
Newton,	Elder Thos. M'Keen.
Madison,	Elder Victor King.
Philadelphia, 2d,	Rev. C. C. Cuyler, D. D.
Bethel,	Rev. J. Le Roy Davies.
Allegheny,	Rev. John Moore.
"	Elder John White.
Georgia,	Rev. Nathaniel A. Pratt.
Indianapolis,	Rev. David Monfort.
"	Elder John Hendricks.
Huntingdon,	Elder Jonathan M'Williams.
South Carolina,	Elder David Leslie.
Mississippi,	Rev. George Potts.
Bedford,	Rev. Jacob Green.
"	Elder John Owen.
Washington,	Elder James M'Farren.
Kaskaskia,	Elder James A. Ramsey.
Oxford,	Elder B. C. Swan.

The following persons also presented satisfactory evidence of their appointment by minorities of the Presbyteries to which they belong, viz:

PRESBYTERIES.	
Fayetteville,	Rev. Colin M'Iver.
Crawfordsville,	Rev. Launcelot G. Bell,
Concord,	Rev. John Silliman.

Mr. James Lenox, Jun., resigned his seat to Elder Samuel Boyd, the principal named in his commission.

The Rev. Ashbel Green, D. D., took his seat as President of the Convention.

The standing committee reported paper No. 1, being a memorial

of a minority of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, which was read and put on docket.

The Rev. Messrs. Junkin, Cuyler, Wilson, and Pratt, and Elders Boyd, Symington and George, were appointed a committee, to consider and report to this house, as soon as practicable, what shall appear to be the most expedient form or method of presenting to the General Assembly the views of this Convention relative to existing grievances in the Presbyterian Church, and the measures necessary for their redress.

After a short recess of the Convention, this committee reported the following resolutions, which were adopted, viz:

Resolved 1*st*. That the only expedient form is that of respectful memorial and petition, addressed to the Assembly, with our signatures, as individuals, together with such other ministers and elders as may choose to unite with us.

Resolved 2*d*. That a committee be appointed to prepare such memorial, when the Convention shall have decided the points to be embodied therein.

The Rev. Messrs. Junkin, Witherspoon, and Wilson, and Elders Boyd, Owen, and George, were appointed.

The Convention had a recess until half past two o'clock.

After recess, the Convention resumed business.

The standing committee on documents reported paper No. 2, being a memorial from the Presbytery of Indianapolis, addressed to the Convention, which was read, and ordered to be placed on the docket.

Paper No. 1 was taken up, and after consideration of the items contained in it, it was

On motion, *Resolved*, 1*st*., That the operation of any Missionary Society within the Presbyterian Church, not responsible to any of its judicatories, is an infraction of her rights, and inconsistent with her peace and integrity.

Resolved 2*d*, That the operation of any Education Society within the Presbyterian Church, for the training of her ministry, independently of her ecclesiastical judicatories, is a usurpation of the rights of the Church, and ought to be resisted, as tending to undermine her own Education Board, and the independence of her ministry.

Resolved, That the above resolutions be referred to the committee on the Memorial.

Adjourned to meet on Monday morning, at 9 o'clock. Closed with prayer.

MONDAY MORNING, May 18, 9 o'clock.

The Convention met, and was opened with prayer. Members present, as before.

The minutes of the last session were read.

Dr. David George, Elder, appeared; and, having produced a certificate of appointment from the Presbytery of Harmony, took his seat as a member of the Convention.

The following persons also produced satisfactory evidence of ap-

pointment by the minorities of the Presbyteries to which they belong, and took their seats as members of the house, viz:

PRESBYTERIES.	
West Lexington,	Rev. Robert Stuart,
Chillicothe,	Rev. Samuel Steele.

The Convention resumed the unfinished business of Saturday, viz: the consideration of paper No. 1, reported by the standing committee.

Resolved, That the committee appointed to draft a memorial to the Assembly be instructed to make such a statement relative to the formation of ecclesiastical judicatories, on what has been called the principle of "elective affinity," as shall express the disapprobation of this Convention of all action on that principle by any judicatory of this church, and our desire that the evils which have already been produced by acting on said principle may be redressed.

Resolved, further, That the right of examining, and after examination, of receiving or refusing to receive, any minister, licentiate, or candidate, whether from foreign bodies, or from Presbyteries of our own church, however sustained by credentials, is inherent in every Presbytery, and is essential to its well-being.

Resolved, That this subject be referred to the committee appointed to draft the memorial to the Assembly.

On motion, *Resolved*, That the subject of doctrinal errors existing in the Presbyterian Church, and also that of the repeal of the resolution of the last General Assembly, touching the right of judicatories to try and condemn heretical publications, be also referred to said committee, as proper to be inserted in the memorial.

The Convention had a recess until half past two o'clock, P. M.

Half past two o'clock, P. M.

The Convention resumed business. The unfinished business of the forenoon was resumed.

Resolved, That without expressing any opinion relative to the constitutionality of the act of the Assembly of 1801, relative to the united action of Congregational and Presbyterian churches and ministers in the frontiers of our country, or the expediency of said Act at the time it was passed, the committee be instructed to express it as the opinion of the members of this Convention, that the farther operation of that Act is injurious to the Presbyterian Church, and therefore that said Act, as soon as practicable, ought to be repealed.

The subject of the "Plan of Union and Correspondence," between the General Assembly and the several General Associations of New England, was referred to the committee, as a fit subject to be embraced in the memorial.

Paper No. 2, reported by the standing committee, being a memorial from the Presbytery of Indianapolis, was taken up and referred to the committee on the memorial.

The Rev. Messrs. Stuart and Steele, with Messrs. M'Pherson and Ferguson, Elders, were added to the committee on the memorial.

Adjourned to meet to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.

Tuesday Morning, May 19, 9 o'clock.

The Convention met, and was opened with prayer. Members present, as before.

The minutes of the last session were read.

The following resolution was introduced, viz:

Resolved, That the committee on the memorial be instructed to present to the General Assembly the solemn conviction of this Convention, that the Presbyterian Church owes it as a sacred duty to her glorified Head, to yield a far more exemplary obedience, (and that in her distinctive character as a church,) to the command which he gave at his ascension into heaven: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." It is believed to be among the causes of the frowns of the great Head of the church, which are now resting on our beloved Zion, in the declension of vital piety, and the disorders and divisions that distract us, that we have done so little—comparatively nothing—*in our distinctive character*, as a church of Christ, to send the gospel to the heathen, the Jews, and the Mohamedans. It is regarded as of vital importance to the welfare of our church, that foreign as well as domestic missions should be more zealously prosecuted, and more liberally patronized; and that, as a nucleus of foreign missionary effort and operation, the Western Foreign Missionary Society should receive the countenance, as it appears to us to merit the confidence, of those who cherish an attachment to the doctrines and order of the church to which we belong.

After some discussion, the above document was committed to the Rev. Messrs. Blythe, Cuyler, and Witherspoon, with instructions to introduce the subject to the notice of the General Assembly, through the committee on Bills and Overtures.

The Convention had a recess until 3 o'clock, P. M.

Three o'clock, P. M.

The Convention assembled, and spent a short season in devotion.

The committee on the memorial presented a report, which was accepted; and the Convention, having decided to consider the same by paragraphs, after making some progress therein,

Adjourned, to meet to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.

Wednesday Morning, May 20, 9 o'clock.

The Convention met, and was opened with prayer. Members present as at the last adjournment.

The minutes of the last session were read.

The Rev. Dugald M'Intyre, from the Presbytery of Abingdon, appeared, and took his seat as a member of the Convention.

Messrs. Baird, Symington and Owen were appointed a committee of finance.

The Convention resumed the unfinished business of yesterday, viz: the report of the committee on the memorial, which was considered by paragraphs; and, after some further progress therein,

The Convention had a recess till half past 2 o'clock, P. M.

Half after Two o'clock, P. M.

The Convention resumed the unfinished business of the forenoon, viz: the consideration of the report of the committee on the memorial. The several paragraphs were amended and adopted.

The question was then taken on the whole report as amended; and the whole was *unanimously* adopted, and is as follows, viz:

To the Reverend Moderator and General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the Memorial and Petition of the undersigned, Ministers and Ruling Elders of said Church, most affectionately sheweth:

That, in the exercise of a common right, guaranteed by the God of nature to all his rational creatures upon earth, and fully set forth in the sacred scriptures as the birthright of every child of his covenant, we come—and we desire to come with the Spirit of the meek and lowly Lamb of God—into the presence of this reverend body, as possessing the only adequate power to afford the relief we desire—we come to spread before you our grievances, and to ask the interposition of your authority for their redress.

With you we recognize the Unity and Universality of that Church of the living Redeemer which he hath purchased with his own blood. "The visible Church, which is universal, consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children." "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

With us you will doubtless agree, that this Church universal is called out of the world, and constituted and organized by her divine Head into a household and family, under general laws and regulations imposed upon her by his own supreme authority. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God"—"of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." It is not left to the corrupt volition of men, whether they will or will not come into this family. On the contrary, they are laid under eternal obligations, by the voice of the Son of man calling them, in the sweet promises of the gospel, to life and peace and joy. Others innumerable are born members of his Church, and it is not optional with them—they may not, if they choose, expatriate themselves from his blessed kingdom. On the contrary, the entire weight of their heavenly Father's authority lies upon them, and binds them to a faithful improvement and everlasting possession of their invaluable birthright.

Still, though the visible Church Universal is thus organized and constituted, yet, as it is physically impossible that all this Church can act together; as it must be collected in various parts of the world into distinct bodies for purposes of worship, and the regulation of social, and, as it were, domestic relations; as the geographical divisions of the world, and the political distinctions which the providence of God has permitted to exist, imperiously call for social organizations of smaller

numbers, we think it cannot be denied that in this restricted sense the Church, or, to speak more precisely, the sections of the Church, must necessarily be voluntary associations; that is, Christians are left free to associate as they may choose into distinct bands for mutual convenience and Christian communion. These distinct communities of believers may also voluntarily connect themselves together into larger bodies, according to the principles laid down in the scriptures and in the standards of the Church which this venerable body represents. Thus is this General Assembly constituted, and in this sense the Presbyterian Church is a voluntary association. No man is at liberty to separate himself from the visible Church; but any man may separate from this portion of it, and attach himself to another. On this principle of common right and common freedom is the Presbyterian Church founded, and therefore she declares, that "every Christian Church or union, or association of particular Churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its *communion*, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed;"—"they think it necessary to make effectual provision, that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith." (*Form of Government*, Chap. I, II, V.)

Agreeably to these principles, the Constitution of our Church makes the Presbyteries the fountains of power. They create the General Assembly. To them is reserved, according to the Scriptures, the power of ordination, installation, removal, and judging of ministers. The Presbytery only can confer ministerial authority; the Presbytery only can take it away. The Presbytery can refuse to ordain or to admit into their number any person whom they judge erroneous or scandalous. If this power does not exist in the Presbytery, your memorialists can see no principle of self-preservation in the body. If every Presbytery is bound to receive all who may present themselves and claim admission on the authority of credentials from a foreign body, or from another Presbytery, it is self-evident that the defection of one Presbytery from the truth and purity of the gospel may involve the entire body in the same corruption. There is no conservative power. The very ends of Presbyterial existence as laid down in our Constitution are defeated, and a wide door and effectual is thrown open, for the introduction of whatever errors it may please the enemies of truth to send abroad among our Churches. And here, Rev. Fathers and Brethren, is the

First grievance over which we mourn.

The last General Assembly, by an act recorded in page 26 of their printed minutes, has denied this right to the Presbyteries, and by that denial has opened the flood-gates of error, which, if not soon stopped, must sweep away the fair fabric of our church's purity, and leave us to sorrow over the melancholy wreck of our Zion, without a willow on which to hang our harps. In behalf of the Presbyteries to which we respectively belong, and of all other true Presbyteries of our beloved church, we invoke a return to the genius of the Constitution; a restoration of the right and power of self-preservation; a re-

peal of the obnoxious act, and a distinct recognition, by this Assembly, of the inalienable right in every Presbytery, of examining every applicant for admission into their number, be his credentials what they may, and of rejecting him, provided they think his admission would endanger their own purity and peace.

II. Intimately connected with, and nearly allied to this, is our SECOND grievance; viz: an act of the last General Assembly, recorded in their minutes, page 26; whereby the right and propriety of a Presbytery's taking up and censuring a printed publication, irrespective of its author, is denied.

This act is the more offensive because it is contrary to the practice of former General Assemblies, and inconsistent with the principles of freedom guaranteed in the Word of God, and the Constitution of our Church. The act in question, whilst it appears to your memorialists to extend this right to errorists, denies a correspondent right in a Presbytery. The abettor of false doctrine may freely divulge his opinions. Any private citizen of the commonwealth, or member of the Church or Presbytery, may freely criticise and severely censure the errors of the published book; but a Presbytery has no rights of this kind. They may not lift the voice of warning. They must not whisper a censure upon the book. They can only try the man. The pestilential volume may send forth its poisonous infection amongst the flock, "over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers," and for whose purity and peace and salvation they are held accountable by the Chief Shepherd; but their Presbyterial hands are tied up. They dare not lift a finger. They can only bring charges against the author.

But, reverend Fathers and Brethren, if the author thus arraigned be artful, and disposed to give trouble, as history teaches us errorists are likely to be, who can tell how long he may perplex the court and defer the issue of his trial? Meanwhile, however, the leaven of false doctrine is working its way. The uncensured and uncensurable book is poisoning the minds of the people, and the Presbytery either cannot or will not apply the remedy. Your memorialists most respectfully and earnestly entreat a reversal of the obnoxious resolution referred to.

III. The THIRD item of grievance and petition, which we beg leave to present, is at the same time an aggravation of the second; viz: The erection of church courts, especially of Presbyteries and Synods, upon the principle of "elective affinity," so called by its primitive advocates; that is, having regard, not to geographical limits; not to convenience for attendance of the members; not to the expedition of business; but to diversities of doctrinal views and church policy in those elected to such bodies, from their brethren and from the standards of the Church; to personal animosities and antipathies growing out of such diversities; and to the consequent enlargement of this alienated interest of sentiment and feeling. Where a Presbytery and Synod of this description exist, it is easy to see how it aggravates the grievance just presented. If, agreeably to the injunction of the last General Assembly, some person does undertake the painful

and unpleasant duty of preferring charges against the author of the book, can it be supposed that a Presbytery, to whom such author is bound by the very affinities of such doctrine, will cut the bonds of their own union, by condemning either the book or its author? And if they should so far forget themselves as to commit the suicidal act of condemning the very doctrines which constitute the principle of their affinity, will their Synod do the same? Will it turn recreant to the cause for which it was created. Thus the Assembly must perceive, that every such prosecution before such body must, if issued at all, be finally issued in the Assembly; and so long as the General Assemblies of our Church consent to the existence of such bodies, just so long do they pledge themselves to protect their action. We therefore have no hope of redress, but in a change of purpose and action in the supreme judicatory of our beloved Church. You, Brethren, and you only, can lay the axe to the root of this evil.

Let us take another view of this subject. Our *Book* of Discipline says, (Form of Government, Chap. X. ii.) "A Presbytery consists of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation within a certain district." But the acts of some late General Assemblies have practically contradicted this clause. It is not true, either of "the Presbytery of Philadelphia," or of "the [Assembly's] Second Presbytery of Philadelphia," or of "the Second [Synodical] Presbytery of Philadelphia," that it "consists of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation within a certain district."

Besides, the natural, and your memorialists believe the inevitable consequence of this principle is, increased alienation, strife for numbers and preponderance, division of churches, disruption of harmony in congregations, the encouragement of dissatisfied spirits, and formation of parties, and all the miseries of violent party strife.—Many of us do honestly believe that the practical effects have been schism in the body—real, substantial, melancholy schism—schism more complete than if different denominations had been at once constituted. The alienation is more perfect than that which exists between either of the bodies and any other denomination covering the same territory. Hence we do most earnestly entreat this Assembly—for the purity of Zion and the peace of the church—we pray for a reversal of the principle, and all the acts springing from it, and a restoration of the Synod created thereby to their former ecclesiastical position.

IV. Nearly allied to this is our Fourth item of grievance, viz: The existence and operation, within our church, of a Missionary Society in no sense amenable to her ecclesiastical jurisdiction. And here you will bear with us, first, in pointing out the connection with the preceding. If Presbyteries do exist, on the avowed principle of diversity in doctrinal opinion and feeling, and have the power of licensing and ordaining (in many instances sine titulo) men of their own creeds, then a missionary institution seems requisite to send such licentiates and ministers into the field. Such an institution does exist; bound by its own rules to sustain missionaries, irrespective of their adherence to or rejection of the doctrinal standards of our church.—

This institution operates largely in our congregations; *first*, by sweeping away from our own Board the funds which, by the laws of all social order, ought to come into the treasury of the body to which its possessors belong; and, *secondly*, by throwing into our Presbyteries, brethren who, in many instances, have never adopted the standards of our church at all, and in more, who have only adopted them "*for substances of doctrine;*" that is, just as much of them as suits their own views. Thus a separate moneyed interest is created and kept up in the bosom of the same Christian community. The Assembly's own Board of Missions, created by herself, governed by herself, and amenable to herself, finds a great and powerful rival in her own house, with whom she comes in perpetual collision. And rival agents meet on the same field, and frequently those of our own church are foiled in their efforts by the improper interference and influence of an institution which owns no allegiance to us, and feels no obligation to our courts. So violent were these contentions, that the Assembly of 1831 recommended a *convention* to be held in Cincinnati, to adjust the difficulties. This convention was held. It decided in favor of the church's carrying on her own missions by her own board. Still, however, the foreign society kept the field, and continues to this hour to conflict with your board.

Now, Fathers and Brethren, these things afflict us exceedingly. We are pained to see such an inveterate warfare carried on so long. And we are unspeakably distressed to be constrained to view this as a part of a great system of operations whose tendency is to subvert the foundations of our Zion. The evidence of such a system forces itself upon us. We cannot shut our eyes against it if we would, and we would not if we could. Painful as the vision is, we are determined to behold it steadfastly; and we crave the attention of this venerable body to the same. Look we pray you to the facts. A large moneyed institution—(for that *is* a large moneyed institution which has a large income from whatever source)—a large moneyed institution, over which neither you as an Assembly, nor the Presbyteries which give you an annual existence, nor the Synods intermediate, have any control, has subsidised almost your whole western territory. "A gift blindeth the eyes." Can a minister or an elder, whose congregation is supported in a large degree by a power foreign to your church, free himself utterly from foreign influence? Vain is the hope! Human nature is not thus constituted. Without impeaching the honesty and the honor of persons thus situated, we feel confident that an influence great and effectual must rest in the hands that dispense this bounty.

But let the Church be her own almoner, and every time her hand is opened to her sons and her daughters, she binds them the more closely to her interests. Her constitution whose legitimate operations produce these happy results becomes the rallying point of recoiling gratitude; and instead of jarring and contentions without end, union in the truth and peace, as its blessed effect, must fill our Zion with joy and gladness. We pray this General Assembly to sustain her own Board of Missions, by solemnly enjoining upon all the church-

es to contribute to its funds, and by rescinding the resolutions formerly passed, which recommended to their patronage "The Home Missionary Society."

V. Your attention is now invited to another part of the same system. Before youth looking forward to the gospel ministry can be properly licensed and sent forth, they must be educated; and efforts have been already made in this cause worthy of high commendation. Nor have we any thing to object against efforts either to prepare or to send men to preach to the destitute at home or abroad. Both these causes we desire to see prospering. For both we have labored and prayed, and for both we will continue to labor and pray. But then we desire to see them prospering consistently with regard to the truth and purity and integrity of our own church. The great burden of ministerial duty is to enlighten and save the world. And no obligation more sacred and solemn lies upon them, than that of training the heralds of the cross who are to bear the banner of her faith in triumph round the world. Let the church give good heed to this great concern, and the work of salvation will go on; let her neglect this, or do it in a careless manner, and the wheels of the gospel chariot must move heavily, stop, perhaps retrograde.

Now the question before us is, to whom shall this most sacred and solemn duty be entrusted by the church? Shall she do it herself, with her own hands? or shall she throw it into the hands of a body, self-created, and in no sense amenable to her ecclesiastical tribunals? a body which may change in half a generation, and train her sons to her own destruction? This is the question we would press upon your consideration: and we would most respectfully suggest, that no church can be safe--safe in her doctrinal standards—safe in her ecclesiastical polity—safe in her financial operations—safe in the independence of her ministry, if that ministry are dependent upon an independent foreign body; and especially, if their houses and lands, their libraries and furniture, are under bonds. Without any impeachment of motives, or imputation of extraordinary weakness, we beg leave to repeat, "A gift blindeth the eyes," and to refer to the course of remark under the preceding item.

Similar collisions occur here also. Your agents are met in the field by the agents of a society beyond your control. They are often beaten off the ground, and the six or seven hundred young men under the care of your Board of Education are reduced to a precarious dependence: whereas, did the church, in her highest ecclesiastical court, stand forth in her own defence, her treasury would overflow, and all these collisions and conflicts of varied interests would cease; whilst her own funds would go to her own sons, and not, to their prejudice, for the maintenance of those in other churches, who are never expected to aid in building up the walls of our Zion. We pray and beseech this reverend body to sustain, by all the weight of its influence, the education cause of our own church.

VI. In the apprehension of your memorialists, not a small proportion of the evils which distract our Zion have grown and do still

grow out of "the plan of union" adopted in 1801. We say nothing here of the wisdom of that measure at the time, nor of its constitutionality. We know it was the work of wise and good men. But we must be allowed to express the opinion, that *now* it leads to alienation, contentions and disorders. For proof of this we have only to refer to the minutes of preceding General Assemblies. It is notorious that very painful conflicts have occurred in the Assembly on this very subject. Brethren had long occupied seats in this body, who were not ruling elders, and never had been Presbyterians, and, it is believed, never intended to become Presbyterians. Nor was this evil remedied without a long and arduous and painful struggle. Under the perfect conviction that peace will never dwell with us whilst the jarring elements of this discord exist together, we beseech this Assembly to annul that act; and for the simple additional reason that the terms of compact are not complied with by our congregational brethren.

In proof of this we allege that "the plan of union" contemplates the existence of a Congregational Association and of a Presbytery on the same ground; whereas we apprehend the facts generally to be otherwise. The Association retains its essential character as such, but is called a Presbytery. Congregational ministers change simply the name, without ever adopting sincerely the Confession of Faith of this church. So far from such adoption, the Presbyteries of Grand River and Portage, on May 1,1822, adopted a confession of faith for their own churches. And although a subsequent General Assembly ordered the formula of questions in our Book to be propounded to all the members of these Presbyteries, yet your memorialists have reason to believe, that in some instances, they were not answered affirmatively at all, and in others with express reservations.

Again, That plan of union provides that every mixed congregation shall appoint a standing committee; "And provided that the said standing committee of any church shall depute one of themselves to attend the Presbytery, he may have the same right to sit and act in the Presbytery as a ruling elder of the Presbyterian church." Yet we have reason to believe that members of churches often sit in Presbytery, who are neither ruling elders nor committee men; and we know, such have occupied seats in the General Assembly. This is an open infraction of the "Plan of Union." Hence we can perceive no obligation binding the Assembly to adhere to a conventional agreement that is practically violated by the other party, and we pray that it may be formally annulled.

VII. Our next grievance is of similar character, viz: "The Plan of Union and Correspondence with the Congregational Associations of New England, and with other churches. It is true, that the relinquishment of the right of voting in the General Assembly has removed part of the evil. No longer now can our constitutional order be voted down by brethren opposed to it in profession and principle. Still, however, against this union there are serious objections.

It gives weight in counsel and debate, which may command votes, to persons who belong not to our society, and who may have a sectarian

purpose to answer by taking a particular side. Such things some of us have seen on the floor of the Assembly.

Besides the whole matter is unconstitutional. The General Assembly never had the power of granting a seat in this house to any person. —(Form of Government, Chap. XII., ii.) "The General Assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of bishops and elders from each Presbytery." Nor does our constitution recognize any other mode of acquiring a right to a seat here. This is a delegated—it is a representative body, and in the very nature of delegation, unless the delegates are *expressly* empowered to delegate others, they *have* no such power. Our constitution knows no such anomaly as representatives transferring the power of representation to others.

We humbly conceive that our Book (Chap. XII., v.) in conceding to the Assembly the power of "corresponding with foreigh churches on such terms as may be agreed upon by the Assembly and the corresponding body," does not contemplate the violation of the fundamental principle quoted in the preceding paragraph, by granting seats in this house to persons not delegated by any Presbytery. For if the assembly have the power of conferring a right to deliberate and vote, it may be so exercised as to bring the church under foreign dominion. Against all this the constitution presents an insuperable barrier in the 6th section of this chapter, where the Presbyteries reserve to themselves the exclusive power of establishing any constitutional rule. Every regulation affecting constitutional principles must be referred to the Presbyteries, and be by a majority of them adopted, before they can be admitted as binding. This in reference to "the Plan of Union" has never been done. Now, clearly, this power of granting seats in the Assembly vitally affects the constitution, which ought not to be sacrificed either to expediency or courtesy.

Hence, with all due respect and affection to the good brethren of other denominations, we pray this General Assembly to restore the Constitution, by repealing the act which assumes this stretch of power.

VIII. Finally, As the object of all ecclesiastical order is *Truth*, in the belief, love and practice of it; and as "to the General Assembly also belongs the power of bearing testimony against error in doctrine," your memorialists would humbly call your attention to the present state of the church in this behalf. There is nothing worth contending for but *Truth:* and, if we are not greatly mistaken, great and fearful inroads are made on the doctrinal standards of our church: and that too not in reference to matters of minor consequence, but in the very fundamental principles of the gospel. One alarming feature of the errors against which we would earnestly entreat this General Assembly to lift up a strong testimony, we beg leave to present. It is their systematic arrangement. Did a solitary individual here and there, in cases few and far between, touch upon a single insulated position that is false, and maintain it even with pertinacity, it would not afford ground of serious alarm. But the case is far otherwise. The errors abroad in the church are fundamental, vital and systematic. The maintenance of one involves the whole, and must lead a logical

mind to embrace the system. Now the system appears to your memorialists to lead directly toward Socinianism. This language may seem harsh and severe. Alas! dear brethren! it is the harshness of love, and the severity of truth. It is not pleasant for us to entertain such an opinion; but with our eyes and our ears open, it is impossible to avoid it. The evidence rushes upon us from the pulpit and the press, and we have no power of resistance. That which the understanding clearly perceives, the mind, with its fondest desires to the contrary, must believe. It is painful for the convicted sinner to believe that his soul is exposed to the wrath divine: it is painful for us to believe that our brethren are departing from the foundations of gospel truth. But a dark hour there often is before the bright dawn of heaven's cheering light upon the soul benighted; may we hope from the action of this venerable body a return to the pure light of scripture truth, and a strong testimony against the errors that overturn our constitutional standards?

Another alarming feature is the boldness and pertinacity with which the very existence of these errors is denied. To this General Assembly it would not be information, were we to state that the same system of error has been characterised by the same wily policy in every age of its appearance in the church. It has ever been its course at first to deny its own existence, and when that was no longer practicable, to assume a mask, and clothe itself with zeal as a cloak. This strong feature of the modern singularly identifies it with the ancient heresy.

It is not our purpose at present to go into a *discussion* of these doctrines, nor yet to adduce proof of their existence in our Church.—The evidence of this is as clear as the evidence of your existence in this house to-day. The teeming press and the groaning pulpit proclaim it. It may be proper simply to present an outline of the system. Thus,

1. *The doctrine of Adam's federal headship, or representative character, is denied.*
2. *The doctrine of original sin is denied.*
3. *The doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity is denied.* The rejection of these necessarily leads to
4. *A denial of the doctrine of Christ's federal headship or representative character.*
5. *A denial of the imputation of his righteousness to the believer, as the essential procuring cause of his justification.*
6. *A rejection of the true, proper, vicarious nature of the atonement of Christ; and holds up his sufferings,—his tears and groans and anguish and death, as a mere exhibition; a shew unmeaning, for a purpose not in accordance with revealed truth.* Thus the daughter of Zion searches in vain, in the luxuriant garden of these errors, for the beloved of her soul, and in the anguish of her disappointment exclaims, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

But these errors do not terminate in simple negation. Another system is substituted in room of the Gospel thus rejected. It is the system of human perfectibility. Thus,

1. *The doctrine of human ability is held, involving the principle, and gratuitously assuming it as true, that man's moral obligations are measured and bounded by his present ability to meet all the requirements of God's law.*

2. *Accordingly, the necessity of the agency, the omnipotent agency of the Spirit of God in the conversion of the soul, is denied; and conversion is affirmed to be the work of the creature. Man regenerates his own soul. The Spirit's agency is that of mere moral suasion. Regeneration is simply an act of the mind; the first in the series of holy acts. Faith is an act of the mind, and nothing but an act of the mind.*

Now, reverend Fathers and Brethren, we humbly conceive that this is "another Gospel;" entirely and essentially different from that laid down in the Bible and our Confession of Faith. And we do most solemnly and sorrowfully believe, that, unless the Spirit of the Lord raise up a standard against it, it will be followed in our Church, as it has been elsewhere, by the entire system of Pelagianism, and ultimately of Socinianism. If the atonement is not essentially vicarious and penal, why demand a *Divine* Redeemer? If an *exhibition* is all that is required, why not hold up Stephen, or Peter, or Paul, or John Huss, or John Rogers? This tendency towards Socinianism we think is plainly manifested in the denial of the eternal filiation of the Son of God.

Again, if the Spirit's work is merely a moral suasion, why a Divine and Almighty Spirit? Must not the mind which denies the necessity of an omnipotent influence be strongly tempted to disbelieve the existence of an omnipotent agent?

That we are not mistaken in our opinion of the tendency of these doctrines, we think is proved by the fact, that Unitarians do claim affinity with them, and express their unfeigned satisfaction at the prospect of a rapid increase of liberal principles.

And now, dear Brethren, we approach the termination of this long memorial. We have, perhaps, been tedious. It is because our heart is full of sorrow; and sorrow finds a momentary relief in pouring forth even unavailing complaints. But ours is not a hopeless sorrow. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and we know that his Truth, though borne away, insulted and forlorn, into the dark shades of a vain metaphysical philosophy, will yet break forth, and dispel the gloom by which we are surrounded, and send through our hearts and our churches the light of life and the consolations of love.

In pressing our petition for redress of all the grievances we have enumerated, and such others in regard to measures as the wisdom of this General Assembly may select, we entreat you to turn your eye upon the aspect of the world. Lo! what an inviting field for benevolent enterprise. And is there a body of believers in the whole church militant, invested with so many of the qualifications to enter it, and

gather the rich harvest of glory to our divine Redeemer, as the Presbyterian Church? The position of our country points us out,—the position of our church points us out,—the position of the world points us out,—the voice of unborn and unsanctified millions calls us to the conflict,—the Lord of Hosts himself has gone down into the plain before us, and chides our long delay. Now we ask, Brethren! what causes this delay? Why, when the armies of the living God begin to consolidate, and himself gives the watchword, "*Truth* and *Victory*," —oh! why this delay? Ah! there is division in the camp! "There be some that trouble us." *Innovation* distracts our counsels, alienates our affections, turns the sword of brother in upon brother, and the Master's work remains undone. Do you ask, 'how shall the evil be remedied?' We reply, 'Let this Assembly come up to the work of reform. Let them establish the ancient landmarks of truth. Let them unfurl the banner of the Constitution. Let all who cannot fight under this grasp the standard that suits their own views; put on their own approved armor; descend into the plain, and stand or fall to their own Master. We pledge ourselves in the face of High Heaven, the real Presbyterian Church will not shrink from the conflict: and though our earthen pitchers may be broken, our lights shall shine, and "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" shall turn the eye of a gazing world to that point of the field where victory perches on the BANNER OF TRUTH.'

Venerable Fathers and Brethren, we are done. With you and God and Christ and his Spirit we leave our cause. That He may direct all your counsels in this behalf to his own glory and the Church's good, is the sincere prayer of your humble memorialists.

(Signed,)

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.	PRESBYTERIES.
Alex. Denoon,	John M'Pherson,	Genessee.
W. W. Phillips, D. D.,	Samuel Boyd,	New York.
	James Lenox, Jr.,	"
Isaac V. Brown,		New Brunswick.
George Junkin, D. D.,	Thomas M'Keen,	Newton.
John Gray,		"
James C. Sharon,		Susquehannah.
Ashbel Green, D. D.,	Alex. Symington,	Philadelphia.
William Latta,	William Fahnestock,	"
James Magraw, D. D.,	James Wilson,	New Castle.
J. N. C. Grier,	Robert Ralston,	"
	Arch'd George,	Baltimore.
John Moody,	Robert Elliott,	Carlisle.
Daniel M'Kinley,		"
Thomas Creigh,		"
John Hutcheson,	Jonathan W. Williams,	Huntingdon.
James Galbraith,		"
John H. Grier,	Andrew Ferguson,	Northumberland.
Johnston Eaton,		Erie.

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.	PRESBYTERIES.
J. W. Scott,		Beaver.
Thomas E. Hughes,	John Clarke,	"
A. G. Fairchild,		Redstone.
Alexander M'Candless,		"
Joel Stoneroad,		"
John Rea,	Matthew M'Coy,	Steubenville.
C. C. Beattie,	Samuel Dunlap,	"
Richard Campbell,		"
James Hervey,	James M'Farran,	Washington.
Wm. C. Anderson,		"
Elisha Macurdy,		"
Thomas D. Baird,	Robert Wray,	Ohio.
J. W. Blythe,	Wm. Hawkins,	"
George Marshall,		"
A. D. Campbell,		"
James Campbell,		"
Joseph Reed,		"
Robert Patterson,		"
James D. Ray,		"
Wm. Jeffery,		"
Samuel Ralston,		"
Francis Laird,	James Carothers,	Blairsville.
James D. Hughes,		Portage.
Wm. Hughes,	John Ewalt,	Richland.
James Coe,	E. Burrows,	Miami.
Joshua L. Wilson,	Wm. Schillenger,	Cincinnati.
F. A. Kemper,		"
Thos. E. Hughes, Jr.	Benj'n C. Swan,	Oxford.
James Culbertson,	John Thompson,	Lancaster.
Alex. Williams,		Salem.
John Matthews,	James A. Ramsay.	Kaskaskia.
N. L. Rice,	John Carr,	Louisville.
Colin M'Iver,		Fayetteville.
Hugh Dickson,	David Leslie,	South Carolina.
Thomas Alexander,		"
James Blythe,	Victor King,	Madison.
John Witherspoon,	David George,	Harmony.
Joseph Adams,		Tuscaloosa.
Alex'r A. Campbell,		Western District.
Sam'l Caldwell,	Johnston White,	Allegheny.
John Moore,	Benj'n Junkin,	"
John Munson,		"
James Snodgrass,	Stephen Coe,	Wooster.
C. C. Cuyler.		Philadelphia 2d.
J. Leroy Davies,		Bethel.
David Montfort,	John Hendricks,	Indianapolis.
Nathan A. Pratt,		Georgia.
Jacob Green,	John Owen,	Bedford.

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.	PRESBYTERIES
Launcelot G. Bell,	Henry Robison,	Crawfordsville.
John Silliman,		Concord.
John L. Montgomery,		Amite.
Robert Stuart,		West Lexington.
Samuel Steele,		Chillicothe.
Thomas Cummings,	Thomas Houston,	Hudson.
George Potts,		Mississippi.

Ordered, That 2,500 copies of the Minutes of this Convention be published, for distribution in the churches.

A communication was received from the session of the church of Manchester, Ohio, expressive of their adherence to the "Act and Testimony," which was read and put upon file.

Adjourned to meet to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock.

THURSDAY MORNING, MAY 21, 9 o'clock.

The Convention met, and was opened with prayer. Members present as at the adjournment.

The minutes of the last session were read.

Mr. Stephen Coe, Elder, from the Presbytery of Wooster, appeared and took his seat as a member of the Convention.

Rev. Messrs. Junkin, Green, and Baird, were appointed a committee to superintend the printing and distribution of the minutes of the Convention.

Resolved, unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be given to the Trustees of the Second Presbyterian Church, and to the people of Pittsburgh and the vicinity, for their kindness and hospitality manifested to the members of this Convention during its sittings.

Unanimously *Resolved*, That the thanks of this house be given to those Editors of religious newspapers, who, by giving publicity to the "Act and Testimony," and other documents connected with the same, have contributed to the furtherance of the views of this Convention in reference to the much desired reform in the church.

The Convention having endeavored to execute the trust confided to them, in the important particulars of memorializing the General Assembly, and provided for giving to their constituents a detail of their transactions, by the publication of all their minutes, unanimously adopted the following resolutions, viz:—

1. That this Convention are deeply impressed with the conviction, that the Act and Testimony, prepared by some of the minority of the last General Assembly, in connexion with other brethren, and since that time so extensively adopted, has been, under the smiles and blessings of God, of marked and extensive benefit to our beloved church

2. That we recognize our obligations in the most lively gratitude to God, for the care of Providence in bringing together the members of the Convention, in health and safety, and in an especial manner, for uniting us together in the most harmonious accord, in all the measures that have been discussed and adopted

3. That the Convention declare, that after prayer and thanksgiving, its proceedings will be terminated, and that, of course, it will be considered finally dissolved. In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, prayer and praise to God were offered, the apostolic benediction was pronounced, and the President declared the Convention finally dissolved.

NOTE.—A number of clergymen and elders desired to have their names attached to the memorial, but had not the opportunity. Others also were thus disposed to add their signatures, but it was found if this should be done it would have required another book to contain the names; they are therefore omitted.

ACCOUNT of the Financial Committee with the Pittsburgh Convention.

By 67 members at two dollars each paid, - - -		$134 00
By donations from individuals, - - - -		3 00
By sales of memorial to different persons, - - -		3 00
Total, - - - -		$140 00
To fifty dollars, on account of former expense, paid to Mr. Symington, - - - -	$50 00	
To ten dollars paid to janitor of the 2nd church,	10 00	
To stationary for the Convention, - -	1 07	
To printing 600 copies of memorial, and 2500 of the minutes of the Convention, - - -	65 73½	
To binding the minutes, - - - -	12 50	
Total, - - - -		$139 30½
		$ 69½